

"Our constituents will not be furloughed from needing assistance, so we won't be furloughed from offering it."

□

April 7, 2011

Media Contact: Douglas Rivlin (202) 225-8203

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Washington, DC) – *With Republicans threatening to shutdown the Government rather than compromise and reach a budget deal, Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL-4) said today that his congressional staff would continue to serve the constituents of the 4th Congressional District regardless of what transpires.□ In the eventuality of a shutdown, his offices will remain open and each staff member will remain at their jobs.□ The following is a statement by Rep. Gutierrez.*

I asked my staff and they said they would continue, even if they are not reimbursed for their work because they believe in what we are doing and in the help we provide our constituents. All of the work we do here is essential to my role as a Congressman. I doubt very seriously that

the needs of my constituents will decrease because the government shuts its doors. Quite the opposite. Our constituents will not be furloughed from needing assistance, so we won't be furloughed from offering it.

None of my staffers are "non-essential." Constituents who ask for my help should know that we will still be there to answer their questions and take their calls, even if no one else in the government is. My legislative work depends on identifying the challenges my constituents face in their communities, with government services, and with overall federal policy, so I consider all of our constituent work absolutely essential to my role as a legislator.

A potential shutdown will strike seniors, children, our servicemen and women, and low-income families the hardest. Interrupting pay and benefits and vital services is unwise at any time, but as neighborhoods still recover from the economic downturn, the defunding and shutdown of the government couldn't come at a worse time.

I have just launched a national tour to shine a spotlight on the toll that deportations are taking on U.S. citizens, the immigrants in their families, and others with deep roots in America. Our unprecedented rate of deporting people will not slow down with a government shutdown, but all of the critical services provided to immigrants, prospective immigrants, and U.S. citizens like processing visas, renewing work permits, processing passports and taking applications for U.S. citizenship will come to a halt.

All of the services that may be suspended have less to do with distinctions between "essential" and "non-essential" functions. Rather, we will see in stark relief our skewed national priorities that devalue vital services to the most vulnerable families, the elderly, the sick, and those who serve in the military. I will work to ensure that we fund these vital services and keep the government open, but my staff will remain in place if we do not.

###